



U. S. AGENCY FOR
INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

LAC-IEE-99-26

ENVIRONMENTAL THRESHOLD DECISION

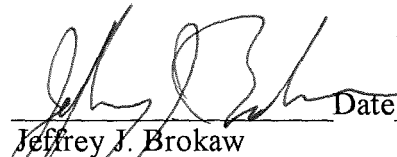
Activity Location	: Central American Region and the Dominican Republic
Activity Title	: Hurricane Reconstruction Inter-Agency Agreement with the U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC)
Activity Number	: 598-0860
Funding	: \$16.0 million
Life of Project	: 1999 - 2001
IEE Prepared by	: Eric Fajer, USAID/LAC/RSD
Recommended Threshold Decision	: Categorical Exclusion/ Negative Determination
Bureau Threshold Decision	: Concur with Recommendation

Comments:

Pursuant to 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(i), (iii) and (xiv), a Categorical Exclusion is issued to all activities involving education, training, and technical assistance, and other actions that will not have an adverse impact on the natural or physical environment, as described in the IEE.

A Negative Determination is issued to activities associated with the small-scale construction, installation and/or rehabilitation of stream flow gauging stations, tide gauge networks, hydrometeorological monitoring and telecommunications networks, and the ALERT systems. Significant adverse environmental impacts are not reasonably foreseeable from implementation of these activities. Potential minor impacts will be mitigated through the development and implementation of environmental guidelines, a copy of which shall be submitted to LAC Bureau Environmental Officer for his records.

A Supplemental IEE shall be submitted to LAC BEO for any activities not specified in the IEE and the Program Description (Annex A) of the Interagency agreement, or if during design or implementation it becomes apparent that significant negative impacts might result from already described activities. A summary of this decision shall be incorporated into the Interagency Agreement with DOC.

 Date 7/14/99

Jeffrey J. Brokaw
Bureau Environmental Officer
Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean

Copy to : Tim Mahoney, USAID/LAC/RSD, Director
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Initial Environmental Examination

Activity Location	: Central American Region and the Dominican Republic
Activity Title	: Hurricane Reconstruction Inter-Agency Agreement with the U.S. Department of Commerce
Activity Number	: 598-0860
Funding	: \$16.0 million
Life of Project	: 1999 - 2001
IEE Prepared by	: Eric Fajer, LAC/RSD/E
Recommended Threshold Decision	: Categorical Exclusion/Negative Determination

Program Summary: The U.S. Department of Commerce's three bureaus (International Trade Administration, National Institute of Standards and Technology, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) will rebuild appropriate infrastructure, and provide technical assistance and training in the short-term (two years) to support Central America's ability to make decisions that minimize their exposure to future disasters and promote sustainable uses of natural resources in the coastal zone.

Five basic approaches will be used: (a) provide key infrastructure elements; (b) develop hydrometeorological predicting and warning systems; (c) help build local and regional capacity for coastal hazard mitigation; and (d) encourage disaster-resilient economic reactivation by promoting U.S. private sector investment.

Program Description:

Project 1: Basic Infrastructure Reconstruction

Expected activities include:

- Reconstruct and improve geodetic control networks -- A base network of "Continuously Operating Reference Stations" (e.g., metal plates anchored in the ground with cement or metal) will be installed in Honduras, Nicaragua, and Guatemala and will be co-located with Department of Transportation installations for Differential Global Positioning System navigation capabilities.

- Technical assistance, equipment and training of a densified network for the local development of cadastral control points in key coastal areas.
- Equipment and training to appropriate government agencies to support the geodetic control networks.
- Reconstruct and supplement key hydrometeorological monitoring and telecommunications networks (i.e., four foot by four foot by four foot box with meteorological instruments or river height measuring instruments installed under existing bridges).
- Reconstruct and improve tide gauge networks in Nicaragua and El Salvador to provide “real-time” water information – physical installation at critical locations (usually attached to existing bridges).
- Training for Nicaraguan and Salvadoran personnel in tide station installation, operation and maintenance, quality assurance, data processing, information product development, and other aspects of system design and operation.
- Install a single satellite data receiving station (12-foot satellite dish put on a rooftop of building) at a National Meteorological and Hydrological Services office in Costa Rica.

Recommended Environmental Determination: Training and technical assistance provision warrant **Categorical Exclusions** under 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(i) -- “Education, technical assistance, or training programs except to the extent such programs include activities directly affecting the environment (such as construction of facilities, etc.)” Small-scale construction, installation and renovation activities warrant **Negative Determinations**. Environmental considerations will be included in placing the limited number of remote installations and in handling batteries for weather stations. Batteries are rotated every year.

Project 2: Forecast and Early Warning Systems

Expected activities include:

- Developing long-term strategic implementation plans to address the restoration, operation, and maintenance of hydrometeorological forecasting and early warning system infrastructure;
- Installing ALERT (“Automated Local Evaluation in Real-Time”) local flood warning systems in affected countries (i.e., small weather stations, antennas, computers to analyze data) – to provide data on assessing local flood risk and obtain flood warnings.
- Implement the National Weather Service River Forecast System for vulnerable river systems in affected countries – this entails purchasing computers and software, and technical assistance.
- Developing a Regional Seasonal Climate Prediction System in Central America by providing computer equipment, training, technology transfer, and other similar support.

Recommended Environmental Determination: Developing long-term strategic implementation plans, implementing the National Weather Service River Forecast System, and developing a

regional seasonal climate prediction system warrant **Categorical Exclusions** under 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2) (xiv) – “Studies, projects or programs intended to develop the capability of recipient countries to engage in development planning, except to the extent designed to result in activities directly affecting the environment (such as construction of facilities, etc.)” Installing ALERT local flood warning systems warrants **Negative Determination**.

Project 3: Disaster Preparedness and Response

Expected activities include:

- Strengthening forecasting, warning, preparedness and response institutions through training for Central American hydrologists, meteorologists, agronomists, decision-makers, and the media, and workshops in disaster management and climate prediction.
- Developing a framework and proposal to establish a Central American Center for Disaster Reduction.
- Assessing the present status of hazardous materials in the affected region.
- Providing technical assistance to develop port or regionally specific contingency plans for response to hazardous waste spills, and then develop testing and maintenance protocols.
- Producing Environmental Sensitivity Indexes for the East Coast of Honduras and Nicaragua to rank shoreline sensitivity to oil pollution.
- Provide standard spill prevention and response products to national and local officials, primarily software (in Spanish) and appropriate training in spill prevention and response.
- Provide the Dominican Republic with technical assistance to manage critical reservoirs during extreme rainfall events.

Recommended Environmental Determination: Training, technical assistance, and workshop activities warrant **Categorical Exclusions** under 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(i) -- “Education, technical assistance, or training programs except to the extent such programs include activities directly affecting the environment (such as construction of facilities, etc.)” Producing proposals, assessments, indexes, and providing software products and other spill equipment warrant **Categorical Exclusions** under 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2) (xiv) – “Studies, projects or programs intended to develop the capability of recipient countries to engage in development planning, except to the extent designed to result in activities directly affecting the environment (such as construction of facilities, etc.)”

Project 4: Sustainable, Resilient Coastal Communities

Expected activities include:

- Research and monitoring in the Gulf of Fonseca on mangrove recovery and restoration, sedimentation and health of native shrimp populations.
- Complement the research and monitor being conducted by other USG agencies to support implementation of the MesoAmerica Biological Corridor in the Gulf of Fonseca.

- Design and implement a system for assessing long-term weather trends for coastal hazards mitigation.
- Develop locally and regionally appropriate coastal building standards for the Caribbean, to resist severe storms.
- Promote the use of insurance instruments and other market incentives that encourage resilient building construction and siting in coastal areas.
- Train "extension agents" for placement in coastal areas to facilitate information transfer between local communities and municipalities and DOC.

Recommended Environmental Determination: Training, technical assistance, and workshop activities warrant **Categorical Exclusions** under 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(i) -- "Education, technical assistance, or training programs except to the extent such programs include activities directly affecting the environment (such as construction of facilities, etc.)." Research and monitoring activities warrant a **Categorical Exclusion** under 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(ii) -- "controlled experimentation exclusively for the purpose of research and field evaluation which are confined to small areas and carefully monitored." Promotion and development of resilient building standards and system for assessing long-term weather trends warrant Categorical Exclusions under 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2) (xiv) -- "Studies, projects or programs intended to develop the capability of recipient countries to engage in development planning, except to the extent designed to result in activities directly affecting the environment (such as construction of facilities, etc.)."

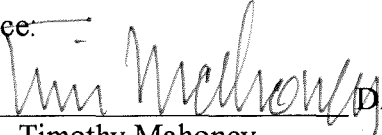
Project 5: Economic Revitalization

Expected activities include:

- Hold regional trade and investment forums and conferences to promote disaster minimization as good business.
- Provide technical assistance on disaster-resilient economic growth to other agencies involved in reconstruction activities.

Recommended Environmental Determination: Training, technical assistance and forums warrant **Categorical Exclusions** under 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(i) -- "Education, technical assistance, or training programs except to the extent such programs include activities directly affecting the environment (such as construction of facilities, etc.)."

Concurrence: _____

 DATE 2-17-99
 Timothy Mahoney
 Director, LAC/RSD

Drafted by: EFAJER:EF:5/18/99:U:\rsdpub\ees\hurricane\iee\ieedoc.iaa.doc